



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge

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PHOTO BLIND GUIDELINES

The refuge offers a photo blind just off the Shorebird Loop Trail. Please see photo blind map for location (**map in progress**). The best time of year for photography generally occurs from November through May, depending on water/habitat conditions. This is also when a variety of waterfowl and shorebirds are present. The photo blind is available November through May on Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays, and Tuesdays, by reservation only. The following regulations are necessary to minimize disturbance to sensitive wildlife species and ensure a quality wildlife photography experience for you.

To use the photo blind, complete the following steps.

1. Request a Reservation

Photographers may reserve the blind a maximum of two days during the four day period the photo blind is available each week. Blind reservations are on a first-come, first-served basis and accepted only within six months of the first date the blind will be used.

Blind reservations may be made in person, by telephone, mail, or email at the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex-Richard J. Guadagno Headquarters and Visitor Center (Visitor Center). Visitor Center hours are 8 am - 5 pm, Monday-Sunday. The Refuge Visitor center is closed most Federal Holidays. Please call for Holiday hours. Send email requests to shannon_smith@fws.gov. Reservations should be made at least 10 days prior to intended use. Refuge staff will contact the photographer to confirm reservation(s). If you need to cancel your request, contact the Refuge as soon as possible so that others may schedule the blind.

2. Receive your Receipt of Confirmation

Photographers will receive a packet of information containing:

- 1) A "Confirmation of Reservation" letter, which will include your date(s) of access and combinations to the entrance gate and photo blind. *Please note:* this letter grants permission to access the refuge to park at the Richard J. Guadagno Headquarters & Visitor Center and walk directly to the photo blind for the date(s) specified only.
- 2) A "Vehicle Placard" to be placed on the dash of your car prior to going out to the blind.
- 3) A "Photography Blind Report" form to be turned in at the Visitor Center before you leave. The packet may also be picked up at the Visitor Center between 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. the day before the confirmed reservation date.

3. Proceed to Blind

Photographers are allowed enter the blind 1 hour before sunrise. If arriving before sunrise, photographers must park at the Visitor Center and proceed directly to the blind on foot. Photographers need to leave the blind by 4:00 pm so they can exit the Refuge before the gate locks at 5:00 pm.

4. Blind Description, Use, and Access

The blind was built in 2005 by Refuge volunteers and is made out of gray, recycled plastic boards and wood. It is in a restricted access area. A log and islands have been placed to encourage birds to perch or rest within range of a 400-500 mm lens. Blind dimensions: five feet deep by six feet wide. The ceiling is six feet high at the front, sloping to five feet high at the back. It has three sets of openings on each side and the front with removable, sliding panels. The blind can accommodate one person comfortably; however, two people at a time are allowed. There are two chairs in the blind. The blind is not wheelchair accessible. Smoking is not permitted inside the blind. Photographers may leave the blind at any time, but once the blind has been vacated, returning to the blind will not be permitted. When exiting the blind, please close up all the panels and shut and lock the door behind you. To open the lock you must dial in the combination and then squeeze the U-shaped piece in to pop the lock open.

We highly recommended photographers call before their reservation date to check on blind and weather conditions.

The trail to the photo blind is a short spur off the Shorebird Loop Trail. From the visitor center, walk down the boardwalk and proceed to the split in the trail at Long Pond. Taking the right fork, you will go over two water control structures and then a narrow wooden footbridge. Immediately after the footbridge, the Shorebird Loop Trail veers to the left and the Photography Blind Trail is straight ahead. Alternatively, you can take the left fork and the Photography Blind Trail will be a sharp left just before the wooden footbridge. Bring a flashlight and look for reflectors on the trail markers to help you find your way in the dark ***(Please note: reflective markers are in the process of being placed along the route. Please consult with refuge staff if you are not familiar with the location of the blind).*** It takes about a half an hour to walk to the blind.

5. Check Out at the Office

Photographers must check out of the blind by returning the "Photography Blind Report" form to the Visitor Center office before leaving.

Refuge reserves the right to revoke photography privileges

Anyone found to be in violation of any conditions in these guidelines will have their photography blind privileges immediately revoked and will be asked to leave the area.

Reducing Disturbance to Wildlife/Tips for a Good Photography Experience

Please conduct your activities so as to keep disturbance to wildlife at a minimum. Such actions will not only benefit wildlife but will help ensure continued, high quality photographic opportunities. Photographers are encouraged to enter blinds prior to sunrise which both reduces disturbance and helps achieve the best photographic results. It is a good idea to check a tide table before reserving the blind. High tide on the bay usually results in more birds on the refuge ponds.

Checklist of helpful items to bring to the blind:

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|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> flashlight | <input type="checkbox"/> warm clothes | <input type="checkbox"/> insect repellent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> field guides | <input type="checkbox"/> binoculars | <input type="checkbox"/> sack for garbage (pack it in, pack it out) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> water | <input type="checkbox"/> food and snacks | <input type="checkbox"/> bean bag camera rest/tripod |

Please leave the area and the blind the way you found it.

ENJOY YOUR DAY!